DOCTRINE OF THE PRIESTHOOD

Let Virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy Confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the Doctrine of the Priesthood shall Distil upon thy soul as the Dews from Heaven. (D & C 121:45)

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ANALYZING THE DIFFERENT ORDERS OF THE PATRIARCHAL PRIESTHOOD

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Introduction

On December 18th, 1833, Joseph Smith Sr. was ordained as the first Church Patriarch in this dispensation, at which time the calling of Church and Stake Patriarchs, together with the necessary Patriarchal Priesthood was inaugurated in the Church. Nine years later, at Nauvoo, the Prophet instituted another Higher Order of the Patriarchal Priesthood. In speaking of this *higher order* on August 15th, 1843, the Prophet referred to it as "the greatest [Priesthood] yet experienced in this church" (*WJS* 245). A little over a month later, the Prophet himself was ordained to the "Fulness" of this Patriarchal Priesthood, which is described in his diary as "the Highest and Holiest Order of the Priesthood" (*The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith,* p. 416). Through this "Highest" Order and "Fulness" of the Patriarchal Priesthood, the Prophet Joseph Smith appointed a birthright heir in his unborn son David, and thus inaugurated Patriarchal Succession in the Priesthood.

In the past, it has been presumed that there was only one order of the Patriarhal Priesthood. For the most part the existence of another Higher Order of the Patriarchal Priesthood, and its Fulness has not been known or acknowledged until recent years. Consequently, the various orders of the Patriarchal Priesthood were all lumped together. The natural result has been a state of confusion where it concerns the issue of Priesthood and Succession. This then is the focus of this issue of *Doctrine of the Priesthood,* to establlish a clear distinction and definition between the Lesser and Higher order of the Patriarchal Priesthood.

Statements Regarding
The Highest Order
and
Fulness of the Patriarchal Priesthood

The Prophet Joseph Smith: [The] 2[nd] [Grand Order of Priesthood referred to in this chapter is] Abrahams Patriarchal Power, which is the greatest [Priesthood] yet experienced in this Church. (*The Words of Joseph Smith* <27 Aug 1843> 245)

The Prophet Joseph Smith: The 2nd [Grand Order of] Priesthood [referred to in this chapter] is [Abraham's] Patriarchal Authority. Go to and **Finish the Temple**, and God will fill it with power, and You Will Then Receive **More Knowledge Concerning This Priesthood.** (*The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* <27 Aug 1843> 323)

The Prophet Joseph Smith: I spent the day in the upper part of the store . . . . in council with [certain brethren] . . . instructing them in the Principles and Order Of The Priesthood, attending to *Washings, Anointings, Endowments* and the communication of **Keys** pertaining to the Aaronic Priesthood, *and so on to* **The Highest Order Of The Melchizedek Priesthood** [i.e.*the* ***Anointing*** *and* ***Ordination*** *of* **Kings and Priests**], setting forth **The Order Pertaining To The Ancient Of Days**, and all those plans and principles by which any one is enabled to secure *the fullness of those blessing which have been prepared for* **The Church of the Firstborn** . . . . In this council was instituted **The Ancient Order Of Things** for the first time in these last days. *(The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* <4 May 1842> 237; *History of the Church* Vol 5:1–2.

Bishop George Miller: Many of the Apostles and Elders having returned from England, Joseph *washed and Anointed as Kings and Priests to God, and over the House of Israel,* the following named persons, as he said he was commanded of God, Viz: James Adams (of Springfield), William Law, William Marks, Willard Richards, Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Newell K. Whitney, Hyrum Smith, and myself; and ***Conferred on us Patriarchal Priesthood***. This took place on the 5th and 6th [i.e. May 4th, & 5th] of May, 1842. (H.W. Mills, "De Tal Palo Tal Astilla," Annual Publications — Historical Society of Southern California Vol. X [Los Angeles: McBride Printing Company, 1917]: 120–21)

Analyzing the Different Orders of the Patriarchal Priesthood*

by
Fred C. Collier

– 1 –

You ask, what is the difference between the Patriarchal Priesthood and Office which the Prophet Joseph Smith held, and the Patriarchal Priesthood and Office that was given to the Church and Stake Patriarchs?

The answers to your questions are all found in the history and order of the Restoration of the Priesthood. First the Aaronic Priesthood was restored by John the Baptist on May 15th, 1829. Included in this priesthood was the authority to baptize, and bless the sacrament, as also to ordain Deacons, Teachers, Priests, Bishops (when they are the literal descendants of Aaron).

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*The following is the substance of a letter written to a friend on January 23, 1990. It was wrutten in response to questions regarding the Patriarchal Priesthood.

A little over a year later, or three months after the Church was organized, on the early morning of the 6th of July 1830, Peter, James (who was the brother of Jesus just as Hyrum was the brother of Joseph, and like Hyrum, he was also the Patriarch of the Church) and John (who may have been the birthright heir of Ephraim) came and conferred upon Joseph and Oliver the lesser portion of the Melchizedek Priesthood. This included the power to confer the gift of the Holy Ghost, and the office of High Priest in the Melchizedek Priesthood, as also the authority of the office of Church and stake patriarchs, the apostleship, the President of the Church and First Presidency and the office of President of the "High (i.e. Melchizedek) Priesthood" of the Church and the Presiding Bishop of the Church, who inasmuch as he was not the firstborn of Aaron, qualified for his office by virtue of being a High Priest in the Melchizedek Priesthood. . . .

Aside from the conferral of Priesthood upon Joseph and Oliver by Peter, James and John, the first ordinations to the Melchizedek Priesthood took place one year after its restoration, on June 3rd, 1831. Joseph ordained Lyman wight and in return Lyman Wight ordained Joseph, just as was done on the day when Joseph and Oliver were ordained to the Aaronic Priesthood by John the Baptist.

At that early date the Melchizedek Priesthood was referred to as the "High Priesthood". The office of an Elder was thought of as an appendage to the Melchizedek Priesthood (D&C 84:29), just as was the Aaronic Priesthood (D&C 107:14; 84:30).

If I remember right the first Seventies in the Church were ordained in 1835, at the same time that the quorum of the Twelve was organized. There were Apostles in the Church before the organization of the quorum of the Twelve, but prior to 1835, reference to an Apostle did not have the same meaning as it did after the organization of the quorum of the Twelve. Originally the word "Apostle" did not necessarily have reference to an ordained office in the Priesthood. It meant a "witness" and was used in connection with Jesus in reference to a special witness for Christ. Hence all those who were witnesses for Christ were "Apostles". There were Apostles who were Elders, and later Seventy apostles, and even some of the sisters were apostles as it was stated in *The Women of Mormondom*. Finally the quorum of the Twelve was created, and these all held the "High Priesthood" and thus were High Priests — hence, High

Priest Apostles. This is the stuff from which Joseph Musser created his "Council of Friends" and "High Priest Apostles.

Included in the restoration which was brought to pass by the visitation of Peter, James and John, was the necessary Sealing Power to Seal by the Holy Spirit of Promise, with Power sufficient to Seal the Saints up to Celestial Glory, together with a promise that they would obtain membership in the Church of the Firstborn. In accordance with the Prophet's statement at the October 25th, 1831 conference, this Sealing Power was an inherent part of the "High Priesthood" and was given to all those who were ordained High Priests in the Melchizedek Priesthood:

> Br. Joseph Smith Jr. said that the order of the High priesthood is that they have power given them to ***seal up the Saints unto eternal life***. And . . . it was the privilege of every Elder present to be ordained to the High priesthood. . . . . .
>
> Br. Sylvester Smith said that he had the testimony that it was the will of the Lord to ***seal his saints,*** and also covenanted to give all to the Lord. . . . . .
>
> Br. Daniel Stanton said that he had a long time since covenanted to do the will of God in all things, and also said that it was his desire to be ***Sealed with the Holy Spirit of Promise***. (*Far West Record* 20–21)

You will notice that the Prophet here states that the "High Priesthood" had power to Seal the Saints up to *"Eternal Life"*. What is important here is that you recognize the difference between being Sealed up to "Eternal Life" and "Eternal Lives". (D&C 132:15–24; *TPJS* 322) This difference is explained in the 131st. section of the Doctrine and Covenants:

> In the celestial glory there are *three heavens or degrees;* And in order to obtain the **HIGHEST**, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage]; And if he does not, he cannot obtain it. He may enter into the other, but that is the end of his kingdom; he cannot have an increase. (D&C 131:1–4)

This same doctrine is explained further in Section 132:

> Therefore, if a man marry him a wife in the world, and he marry her not by me nor by my word, and he covenant with her so long as he is in the world and she with him, their covenant and marriage are not of force when they are dead, and when they are out of the world; therefore, they are not bound by any law when they are out of the world.

> Therefore, when they are out of the world they neither marry nor are given in marriage; but are appointed angels in heaven, which angels are ministering servants, to minister for those who are worthy of a far more, and an exceeding, and an eternal weight of glory. For these angels did not abide my law; therefore, they cannot be enlarged, but remain separately and singly, without exaltation, in their saved condition, to all eternity; and from henceforth are not Gods, but angels of God forever and ever. (D&C 132:15–17)

The Sealing keys of the "High Priesthood", or that Priesthood which was restored by Peter, James and John is sufficient to seal an individual into the lower degree of the Celestial Kingdom, but not in the capacity of husbands, wives, or parents. In other words, this Sealing Power is not sufficient to create an eternal family unit. Those who are sealed up unto "Eternal Life" are promised that they will dwell with God and Christ in Celestial Glory, but not necessarily as Gods. On the other hand, those who are sealed up unto "Eternal Lives" are sealed up in a family unit as Sons, Daughters, Husbands, Wives and Parents. As such they will be Gods, having an endless increase in posterity or "Eternal Lives". Thus the Sealing Power of "Eternal Lives" goes beyond the authority that was Restored by Peter, James and John. It was not until April 3rd, 1836, that this Priesthood and Sealing Power was Restored by Elijah in the Kirtland Temple (D&C 110:11–16).

From all this it becomes evident that the Prophet established two different orders or divisions of the Patriarchal Priesthood; and that inherent within each order are ***Different Sealing Powers*** whereby certain blessings can be *Sealed* upon worthy individuals, both for time and all eternity. That this is so is manifest by the fact that Joseph Smith Sr. was ordained as the first Church Patriarch on December 18th, 1833, (*UPR* Vol 1:18), which was more than two years before the Restoration in the Kirtland Temple, wherein Moses, Elias and Elijah Restored the Higher Order and Fulness of the Patriarchal Priesthood. This being the case, it is evident that the Office and Priesthood of the Church Patriarch must of necessity derive its Priesthood and Authority in Blessings through the the "High Priesthood" which was restored by Peter, James and John.

Prior to the Nauvoo period, there were several occasions when the Prophet Joseph Smith referred to the Patriarchal Office in the High Priesthood as the Patriarchal Priesthood. This he did both in

his revelations and speeches. Not only so, but one of the qualifications for becoming a Patriarch was that the individual be ordained a High Priest in the Melchizedek Priesthood. That the Church Patriarch did indeed hold the Patriarchal Priesthood is self evident from the name of his calling, especially in view of the fact that in accordance with the law, both the Office of Church Patriarch and its attending Priesthood would rightfully descend from father to son, being forever confirmed upon the head of Hyrum Smith and his Posterity after him. It was this Priesthood and the office of the Church and Stake Patriarchs to which President Brigham Young referred, when on August 15th, 1847, he spoke on the "Patriarchal Priesthood" and made the following remarks:

> The Priesthood is again restored on the Earth to bring to man — which we do not receive all at once but we receive grace for grace. When Brother Joseph received the Priesthood he did not receive all at once but he was a Prophet, Seer and Revelator before he received the *Fulness of the Priesthood and Keys of the Kingdom*. He first received the Aaronic Priesthood and was ordained under the hands of John the Baptist. He then had not power to lay on hands to confirm the Church (JSH 1:70) *but afterwards he received the Patriarchal or Melchizedek Priesthood from under the hands of Peter, James and John . . . . . .*
>
> In Joseph's day we [i.e the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles] had to ordain Patriarchs [*in all large* ***branches*** *of the Church*] (D&C 107:39). Could we ordain men to authority greater than we held ourselves? (Heb. 7:7) No. But it is necessary to have patriarchs to bless the people that they may have blessings by the spirit of prophecy and revelation *sealed upon their heads* and their posterity and know what awaits their posterity. Father Smith was the senior Patriarch in the Church and first Patriarch in our day (*UPR* 18:1–2, 13, 16, 21–22) and afterwards Hyrum was the senior Patriarch for his father sealed it upon his head (D&C 124:91) but was their power and authority different from all patriarchs in the Church? No. They were all alike in their authority and blessings.
>
> ***Elijah*** is spoken of in the Bible that he should come in the last days to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the children to their fathers (Malachi 4:6; D&C 110:15). *The fulfillment of this scripture is manifest in* ***establishing the Kingdom of God*** and Priesthood on the Earth in the last days and those who hold the ***Keys of the Priesthood*** and ***Sealing Power*** *have the Spirit and Power of Elijah* and it is necessary in order to redeem our dead and save our children (D&C 128:17–18; *TPJS* 330, 337–340). There is much more importance attached to this than parents are aware of." (TPBY 2:8/15/47; see also *WWJ* 8/15/47)

Through the authority of the *"High Priesthood"* Joseph Smith Sr. gave patriarchal blessings to the Saints, and in doing so he consistently invoked a *Sealing Power* which was restored prior to the visitation of *Elijah* in the Kirtland Temple. Not only so, but prior to December, 1833, there were also many other High Priests who did the same (*UPR* 18:13). In fact, from June 1831, until December 1833, those who were ordained as High Priests in the High Priesthood were taught that they had power to bless the Saints and when so led by the Spirit, to seal them up to "Eternal Life". However, after Joseph Smith Sr. was called to be the Church Patriarch, the specific calling to bless the fatherless was more or less relegated to the Church and Stake Patriarchs. But even after this, it was understood that fathers holding the High Priesthood had the right and duty to *Seal Blessings* upon their own posterity — thus the High Priesthood was considered to be the Patriarchal Priesthood when organized as such. ***But again, it should be remembered that the sealing power of the High Priesthood or Church Patriarch's DID NOT possess the power to create Eternal Family Units***. The one function of a **CHURCH PATRIARCH** which related to the creation of an eternal family unit, was to appoint the lineage in the House of Israel to which those they blessed belonged, whether they were of the blood of Ephraim, Manasseh, Judah or whatever. And when so led by the Spirit, they were even commissioned with sufficient power to seal them up to "Eternal Life", with a promise — even the *"**Holy Spirit of Promise**"*, that they would inherit Celestial Glory and membership in the "Church of the Firstborn". But all this was to be done by revelation and the *Spirit of Prophecy,* and in and of itself, it did not constitute a *sealing into the family tree of the* **HOUSE OF ISRAEL**. Hence it was still necessary for other ordinance work to be attended to, such as ***Marriages, Adoptions and Sealings to Parents***. Thus the sealing into the family tree of the House of Israel, and the sealing to the particular father and mother to whom they would be sealed or adopted, would have to be attended to in another ordinance. The power to ***Seal*** by the ***Holy Spirit of Promise*** as practiced by the early brethren who held the "High Priesthood" was not in all respects the same as the Sealing Power of the Holy Spirit of Promise as referred to in D&C 132:7. The terminology (i.e. the Holy Spirit of Promise) is the same, but the record shows

that there were no family sealings, or eternal marriages entered into until after the restoration of Elijah on April 3rd, 1836.

This Sealing Power which belongs to the "High Priesthood" is the same Priesthood that is mentioned in the Doctrine and Covenants with reference to Hyrum and his calling as Patriarch over the whole Church:

> And again, verily I say unto you, let my servant William [Law] be appointed, ordained, and anointed, as counselor unto my servant Joseph, in the room of my servant Hyrum, that my servant Hyrum may take the office of Priesthood and Patriarch, which was appointed unto him by his father, by blessing and also by right; That from henceforth he shall hold the ***Keys of the Patriarchal Blessings*** upon the heads of all my people, *That whoever he blesses shall be blessed, and whoever he curses shall be cursed; that whatsoever he shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever he shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.* And from this time forth I appoint unto him that he may be a prophet, and a seer, and a revelator unto my church, as well as my servant Joseph . . . . . .
>
> Verily I say unto you, I now give unto you the officers belonging to my Priesthood, that ye may hold the keys thereof, even the Priesthood which is after the order of Melchizedek, which is after the order of mine Only Begotten Son. First, I give unto you Hyrum Smith to be a patriarch unto you, *to hold the sealing blessings of my church,* even the *Holy Spirit of Promise, whereby ye are sealed up unto the day of redemption, that ye may not fall notwithstanding the hour of temptation that may come upon you."* (January 19th, 1841, Revelation to Joseph Smith, see D&C 124:91–94, 123–124)

It is this same *Sealing Power* which is connected to Hyrum Smith and the Office of Church Patriarch, that is intended to be exercised by Stake Patriarchs throughout the Church. Since the days of the Prophet, this doctrine has not been generally understood, the reason for this being that the Sealing Powers which were restored by Peter, James and John, have been Conflated with those which were restored by Elijah and hence forgotten. But all becomes clear when we realize that the Sealing Authority for Patriarchal Blessings Rightly Belongs to Hyrum Smith and his Heirs, as well as to other Branch and Stake Patriarchs, while at the same time, there is another even Higher Sealing Power, which was Restored by Elijah, that has to do with family sealings, and which instead of belonging to Hyrum, *Rightfully Belongs to the Prophet Joseph Smith* and *his*

Birthright Heirs. As the Prophet's Revelation on Eternal Marriage succinctly states it:

> And verily I say unto you, that the conditions of this law are these: All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations, that are not made and entered into and sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, of him who is anointed, both as well for time and for all eternity, and that too most holy, by revelation and commandment through the medium of mine anointed, whom I have appointed on the earth to hold this power (and *I have appointed unto my servant Joseph to hold this power in the last days, and there is* ***never but one*** *on the earth at a time on whom this power and the keys of this priesthood are conferred*), are of no efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead; for all contracts that are not made unto this end have an end when men are dead. (D&C 132:7)

Perhaps one of the clearest distinctions between these two orders of the Patriarchal Priesthood — at least one of the clearest to see print before the turn of the century, was published in the *Juvenile Instructor* in an article written byDaniel Tyler, who (if I remember correctly was the President of the Salt Lake Temple):

> "In a revelation given on the 19th of January, 1841, He [i.e. the Lord] says:
>
> 'For there is not a place found on earth that he may come and restore again that which was lost unto you, or which he hath taken away, even the fullness of the priesthood.'
>
> Perhaps some of my young readers may enquire if Joseph Smith previous to the giving of this revelation was not an Apostle, which is the highest grade of priesthood in the Church, as well as Prophets, Seers and Revelators . . .
>
> Yes, my young friends, all these authorities were in the Church: . . . While Joseph Smith was an Apostle he was also the Chief of the Apostles, and presided over the Apostles and over the whole Church, as is stated in the Doctrine and Covenants, Sec. 107:91–92. The question then arises, What is meant by the **FULLNESS OF THE PRIESTHOOD**?
>
> It does not mean any special office above the Apostles, but that there were powers belonging to the different grades of priesthood which had not been conferred. . . . *As a faint illustration, I will speak of the Patriarchal Priesthood, and say that every faithful Elder in Israel who has received a patriarchal blessing by a legally authorized father in Israel, is, himself, by virtue of his blessing, a patriarch to his children . . . .*

But all faithful patriarchs have not ***the fullness of that priesthood*** . . .

In like manner men may be ordained to other grades of priesthood without obtaining a fullness thereof. The Lord informed the prophet that the temples were the places to receive "**The Fullness of the Priesthood.**" . . . .

These additional powers include *all of the keys* that belong to the holy priesthood on the earth, or were ever revealed to man in any dispensation, and which admit men and women within the veil. They enable them to pass by the angels and the gods, until they get into the presence of the Father and the Son. *They make of them* ***kings*** *and* ***priests, queens*** *and* ***priestesses*** *to God, to* ***rule*** *and* ***reign*** *as such* ***over their posterity*** *and those who may be given to them by* ***adoption*** . . . ." (*Juvenile Instructor* 15:111)

Conditional Laws and Restrictions Attending the Sealing Powers

The Church and Stake Patriarchs were not by virtue of their ordination Kings and Priests, nor were they given the Sealing Keys of Elijah, and they did not therefore hold the Fulness of the Patriarchal Priesthood. However the record is clear that the Church Patriarchs did possess a certain amount of sealing power. Of course this power was limited, but then so also was that of Elijah. In the case of the former, the sealings were administered to those who had undergone considerable sacrifice and service for the sake of the Kingdom. In substance, they had, at least for some period of time, completely given of themselves in a covenant of Total Commitment to Christ and his Church. This was the Everlasting Covenant of the "High Priesthood", and it was on the basis of this Covenant and the Selfless Sacrifice which was required to fulfill it, that the Saints merited being *Sealed Up unto* "Eternal Life". But this was not the whole of the condition — it was also expected that they would continue faithful throughout their lives, and if not, then their blessing was abrogated.

Part of the wording in the "Holy Spirit of Promise" was "that ye may not fall notwithstanding the hour of temptation that may come upon you." (D&C 124:124) But it should be remembered that this promise was predicated upon the doctrine that through one means or another, the Lord would take an individual to Himself, or remove him from mortality before he would allow him to commit a sin which would cause him to lose his promised reward. Yet still it is clear that after being sealed, should an individual then turn

round and hate God, and fight against His Priesthood or Kingdom that he would forfeit his blessing. Thus the context of the Sealing was conditional, being predicated upon "continued faithfulness and "enduring to the end". But this same condition was also placed upon the sealing Keys of Elijah. The Prophet's 1843 revelation on Eternal Marriage spells out the conditions as follows:

> Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man marry a wife according to my word, and they are sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise [as given in the Second Anointing], according to mine appointment, and he or she shall commit any sin or transgression of the new and everlasting covenant whatever, and all manner of blasphemies, and if they commit no murder wherein they shed innocent blood, yet they shall come forth in the first resurrection, and enter into their exaltation; but they shall be destroyed in the flesh, and shall be delivered unto the buffetings of Satan unto the day of redemption, saith the Lord God.
>
> The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which shall not be forgiven in the world nor out of the world, is in that ye commit murder wherein ye shed innocent blood, and assent unto my death, after ye have received my new and everlasting covenant, saith the Lord God; and he that abideth not this law can in nowise enter into my glory, but shall be damned, saith the Lord. (D&C 132:26–27; see also HC 1:323–324)

It is evident from the above that once a man has been sealed by the power of Elijah the blood of Christ can no longer be accessed as an atonement for his sins. Instead he must atone for his own sins by the shedding of his own blood. This is the doctrine of "Blood Atonement", about which so much has been said by the anti-Mormon world. The law was that after a man had been Sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise, that if he should thereafter commit any grievous sin such as adultery, his life should be taken by the Priesthood as a blood offering and sacrifice for his own sins, and this too is in accordance with his own former Agreement and Covenant. Yet, as is clear from the above, not even this can atone for the shedding of innocent blood, or the sin against the Holy Ghost which is an avowed hatred for God.

The Truth is that there is more than works at issue here. The Eternal Father in his infinite mercy will give us the time we need to overcome our weaknesses, but without the proper attitude, even time is of no avail. In the end Total Commitment to God is the essential Law upon which all Celestial Blessings are Predicated,

and this is an ongoing sacrifice of service which is offered through perfect love, and without this attitude and its never ending fountain of works, no one will ever see Celestial Glory.

— Joseph's Birthright — The Presiding Patriarch Over All Israel

As the heir of Ephraim, the Prophet Joseph Smith was the Presiding Patriarch, Piest and King over all Israel, and by virtue of this birthright he had a legal right to possess and preside in the Sealing Keys of Elijah. It would be through these Keys that he would bless the children of Abraham. In substance what he held was the office of the *Right of the Firstborn* over all the House of Israel, along with all the accompanying Priesthood and Sealing Keys. In other words, Adam was and is the Firstborn, and the Prophet Joseph Smith was his Birthright Heir. As such he stood as Adam's mortal representative on Earth. Adam was the Father and God of the human race, and Joseph stood in his place both as Father and as God, and in this capacity he yielded the Sealing Power of Elijah, that he might bless the whole family of man (*TPJS* 322). This is the essence of the Right of the Firstborn. It was in this capacity and through this office that the Prophet Joseph Smith stood as Adam or as God to the people, and there is never but one at a time on the Earth upon whom this Office and Right, with all its powers can be held (D&C 132:7). Others may be ordained to these Keys as Patriarchs in their own right and according to their Birthright in the House of Israel — but they must be *One* with and in *Righteous Subjection* to Adam's Birthright Heir, who holds "The Right of the Firstborn". This was what Jedediah M. Grant had in view when he made the following statement:

> There can only be *one* **Adam**, *and that is the ruling power* — that man who holds ***the Keys of the Kingdom of God on earth — that man is the Adam of the earth****, he is God's mouthpiece, his presiding officer, and the only man who has the legal right to preside, and to turn the key of power, the key of life and death*, and hold forth the sceptre of righteousness to the nations. (*Mormon Thunder A Documentary History of Jedediah Morgan Grant*, by Gene A. Sessions, p. 174)

This Office and Priesthood of the "Right of the Firstborn" is patriarchal in nature and descends from father to Son. It was referred to in the book of Abraham as follows:

I sought for the blessings of the fathers, and the right whereunto I should be ordained to administer the same; having been myself a follower of righteousness, desiring also . . . to be a father of many nations, a prince of peace, and desiring to receive instructions, and to keep the commandments of God, I became a **RIGHTFUL HEIR**, a *High Priest*, holding the *RIGHT BELONGING TO THE FATHERS*. It was conferred upon me *from the fathers; it came down from the fathers, from the beginning of time, yea even from the beginning, or before the foundation of the earth, down to the present time, even* ***THE RIGHT OF THE FIRSTBORN,*** *or the [right of the] first man, who is Adam, o[u]r first father, through the fathers unto me. I sought for mine appointment unto the Priesthood according to the appointment of God unto the fathers concerning the seed.* (Abraham 1:2–4)

As it is stated above, this Office together with the Sealing Keys and Priesthood which *Rightfully Belong* to this Office, descends from father to son. This was the meaning behind the statement in the 113th section of the Doctrine and Covenants wherein it states that the Root of Jesse was a descendant of Jesse and of Ephraim, "unto whom *Rightly Belongs* the **PRIESTHOOD**, and the **KEYS OF THE KINGDOM**, for an ensign, and for the gathering of my people in the last days." (D&C 113:6)

The word ***Rightly*** makes reference to ***Birthright*** (D&C 107:40; 113:6, 8; 68:16–21; 107:16, 76; Mosiah 29:6; Alma 54:17–18) and in accordance with the foreordained law as decreed in the Grand Council of Heaven before this world was, the "**KEYS OF THE KINGDOM**" *Rightfully Belong* to the line of Adam's *BIRTHRIGHT HEIRS* who each in their own turn, held the **RIGHT OF THE FIRSTBORN**. In other words, this Office and the Priesthood and Sealing Keys associated with it were to be passed down from father to son. The Prophet Joseph Smith held the "**RIGHT OF THE FIRSTBORN**" *over the whole family of* **ADAM**, and as such he was the Presiding Patriarch over all Israel, and the **KINGDOM OF GOD**. And he appointed this Office and Priesthood, to descend down through his posterity after him. To his son Joseph III, upon the conditions of righteousness he bequeathed his Office as President of the Church. But his office in the **KINGDOM OF GOD**, holding **THE RIGHT OF THE FIRSTBORN**, as **PRESIDING PATRIARCH OVER ALL ISRAEL** — this Office he designated to be given to his unborn son whom he directed to be named David.

Notice the following blessing which the Lord pronounced upon Joseph and his posterity after him and the reference to *the Sealing Power of the Priesthood*, which was in like manner to pass down

through his **BIRTHRIGHT HEIRS**. It is significant too, that this promise of the Lord comes from the same revelation as that quoted above, with reference to the *Patriarchal Office and Sealing Power* which Hyrum and his *Birthright Heirs* would hold. But again, we should remember that Hyrum's birthright was to be PATRIARCH over a *GENTILE CHURCH*, or *"Patriarch to the Fatherless",* and his Sealing Power *did not possess* the *KEYS OF POWER TO CREATE CELESTIAL FAMILIES*.

> And now I say unto you, as pertaining to my boarding house which I have commanded you to build . . . let my servant Joseph and his house have place therein, from generation to generation.
>
> *For this anointing have I put upon his head, that his blessing shall also be put upon the head of his posterity after him.*
>
> *And as I said unto Abraham concerning the kindreds of the earth, even so I say unto my servant Joseph:* ***In thee and in thy seed*** *shall the* ***kindred of the earth be blessed****." (D&C 124:56–58)*

Obviously the Prophet's posterity would not be in a position to fulfil this prophecy or to bless the "kindred of the earth" if they were not entitled to, and in possession of the necessary Sealing Powers of the Priesthood. The whole idea that the Prophet's posterity were entitled to the Sealing Powers gains momentum when we realize that the above passage is not the only revelation promising blessings upon the Prophet's seed. Indeed, similar blessings were promised on several occasions in other earlier revelations. Consider the following promise which was given of the Lord on December 6th, 1832:

> Therefore, let the wheat and the tares grow together until the harvest is fully ripe; then ye shall first gather out the wheat from among the tares, and after the gathering of the wheat, behold and lo, the tares are bound in bundles, and the field remaineth to be burned.
>
> Therefore, thus saith the Lord unto you, with whom the *Priesthood hath continued through the lineage of your fathers* — For ye are lawful heirs, according to the flesh, and have been hid from the world with Christ in God — *Therefore your life and the priesthood have remained, and must needs remain through you and your lineage [i.e. the lineage of Joseph Smith] until the restoration of all things* spoken by the mouths of all the holy prophets since the world began. Therefore, blessed are ye if ye continue in my goodness, ***a light unto the Gentiles*** (See D&C 109:60; 45:17, 22–30; also 3 Nephi 16:10–15), and ***through this priesthood****, a* ***savior*** *unto my people* ***Israel***. (See D&C 113:7–8) The Lord hath said it. Amen. (D&C 86:7–11)

Several years after this Revelation was given, on April 3rd, 1836, Noah appeared in the Kirtland Temple, and conferred additional Keys, Powers and Blessings upon the Prophet and Oliver, with a promise that they would descend upon their posterity after him:

> After this, Elias [i.e. Noah D&C 27:6–7; Luke 3:19, 26; *TPJS* 157] appeared, and committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham, saying that in ***us and our seed*** *all generations after* ***us should be blessed***. (D&C 110:12)

It is interesting that this blessing was not only given to Joseph and his posterity, but also to Oliver Cowdery and His posterity. We learn from section 18 verse 9 in the Doctrine and Covenants that Oliver's calling was the same as that of Paul's, which was to the Gentiles, and it is significant that after Oliver's apostasy his blessing was given to Hyrum:

> And from this time forth I appoint unto him [i.e. Hyrum] that he may be a prophet, and a seer, and a revelator unto my church, as well as my servant Joseph; That he may act in concert also with my servant Joseph; and that he shall receive counsel from my servant Joseph, who shall show unto him the keys whereby he may ask and receive, and be crowned with the same blessing, and glory, and honor, and priesthood, and gifts of the priesthood, *that once were put upon him that was my servant* ***Oliver Cowdery****;* That my servant Hyrum may bear record of the things which I shall show unto him; that his name may be had in honorable remembrance from generation to generation, forever and ever. (D&C 124:94–96)

By and large, from the Prophet's death on, it has been all but totally forgotten that he ever taught that Sealing Keys were inherent in the Priesthood restored by Peter, James and John. A good example of this cover-up is found in the Prophet's October 25th, 1831 statement, quoted above, wherein he said that "the order of the Highpriesthood is that they have power given them to seal up the Saints unto eternal life. And said it was the privilege of every Elder present to be ordained to the Highpriesthood." (*Far West Record* 20–21) The minutes of this meeting are discussed in a footnote which was added to the *History of the Church* by B. H. Roberts, but the Prophet's speech is not quoted at all (*HC* 1:219–220). In the case of *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, some of the Prophet's remarks to the conference are quoted (*TPJS* 9), but the important statement regarding the Sealing Keys was omitted without notice.

Generally speaking, the scholarly consensus today is that in later years the Prophet turned away from his earlier teachings with regard to Sealing Keys being inherent in the Priesthood which was restored by Peter, James and John. The general thinking is that during the Nauvoo period the Prophet disavowed this doctrine and claimed instead that the Sealing Keys were restored by Elijah. But those who have held this view have neglected to recognize the significance of the Prophet's 1841 revelation (i.e. Section 124:91–93, 124). Not only so, but even as late as 1843, which was less than one year before his death, the Prophet spoke again upon this subject, affirming in certain terms that his views had not changed. It was in the Prophet's August 27th, 1843 speech on the three grand orders of the Priesthood, wherein he stated that Abraham, before he was blessed of Melchizedek (as in Genesis 14) possessed certain Sealing Power which was sufficient to admit him into the presence of God. (*The Words of Joseph Smith* 246)

A careful analysis of this speech reveals the following:

1 That there are three different orders of Priesthood referred to in Hebrews chapter 7. The Prophet names these three orders as follows:

A. The Aaronic or Levitical Priesthood.

B. The Patriarchal Priesthood of Abraham, which he held in three different degrees, at different stages of his progresion, during his mortal probation. Inherent within the first and lowest of these, were certain *Sealing Powers* which Abraham held before he met Melchizedek (as in Gen 14), and which were sufficient to admit him into the presence of God (as in Gen 12 & 13). This Priesthood is the same that is given in our day to the Church Patriarch and consists of being a High Priest and Patriarch in the Melchizedek or "High Priesthood", along with its accompanying *Sealing Keys*. The second stage of Abraham's Patriarchal Priesthood was the Higher "Patriarchal authority" which he received from Melchizedek on the day that he met him, after the slaughter of the Kings. It was on this occasion that Abraham received his Endowment, wherein he was anointed a King and Priest and entered into Covenant that he would order his life in accordance with "the Law of the Fulness of the Priesthood". The Prophet refers to this Priesthood as "the greatest [Priesthood] yet experienced in this Church" (*WJS* 245). The third and highest

stage or increment of Abraham's Patriarchal Powers, came when he obtained his Second Anointing, wherein he received the "Key and Power of Endless Life", or what we would refer to as the Sealing Keys of Elijah (TPJS 322). It is these last Sealing Powers which constitute the "Fulness of the Patriarchal Priesthood". According to the Prophet Joseph Smith, Abraham did not obtain these Keys until after he had proven himself in his probationary state, wherein among other things, at the command of God, he willingly offered up his only son Isaac (*TPJS* 322).

C. The Third Grand Order of Priesthood referred to in the Prophets speech is the Priesthood which Melchizedek held (though in saying this, we need to bear in mind what the Prophet taught, namely that "All Priesthood is Melchizedek, but there are different portions or degrees of it" (*TPJS* 180). This Third Grand Order of the Priesthood which Melchizedek held, is clearly described in the *Joseph Smith Translation* of Genesis chapter 14 — as also in Hebrews chapter 7, and the Prophet's speech as referred to above. This last Priesthood can only be obtained direct from God, by the calling of His own voice, and involves a personal Covenant between God and the individual who thus receives it.

There are a number of reasons why these teachings have not been recognized before. For one, the Prophet's early doctrine of the Sealing Keys has for the most part been completely forgotten. Not only so, but the Prophet's 27 August 1843 speech on the "Three Grand Orders of the Priesthood" was not very well reported — the Prophet's oration lasted three hours and fifteen minutes, but the account of it in the *History of the Church* can easily be read orally in six minutes. In recent years, two other accounts of this speech have surfaced — one reported by Franklin D. Richards, and another by James Burgess — it is the Richards account which contains the statement to which I have referred above. Both of these have been published in *The Words of Joseph Smith*.

Because of the fact that its institution was shrouded in secrecy, — that is in the secret meetings of the *Holy Order*, and Council of Fifty, this Highest Order and Fulness of the Patriarchal Priesthood is not well known or understood. Yet it is clear from the Prophet's speeches, and the history which has been left to us, that this Priest-

hood, together with its ordinances, preoccupied the Prophet's mind during the whole of the Nauvoo period, and that during that time, it was the dominant theme or principle of his life!

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